Social Integration in Social Isolation: Newcomers' Integration during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Marianne Barker

Abstract

Attending to immigrants' social integration is a complex challenge for adult educators in ordinary times, and the complexity has significantly increased with the COVID-19 pandemic. This exploratory paper begins by outlining four aspects of social integration: forming social networks, developing a sense of belonging, linking social integration to the workplace, and language learning. Working within an intersectionality framework that foregrounds migrants' experiences of discrimination, this paper reveals ways that migrants have experienced increased discrimination and inequality in their social integration since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Recommendations are made regarding tending to migrants' physical and psychosocial needs, countering discriminatory attitudes with empathy, addressing the digital divide, and using intersectionality to empirically examine migrant experiences.

Keywords: Immigration, social integration, COVID-19, intersectionality

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted processes of immigration and the experiences of immigrants across the globe. Not only has the pandemic had a drastic impact on trends in global migration, seriously impeding movement across borders, it has also severely impacted the processes and pathways of integration for newcomers as they settle into their new homes. Prior to the pandemic, immigrants in Canada could benefit from a wide range of services to support their economic, social and cultural integration into their new home. However, as of mid-May, 2020, at the time of writing this paper, the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Government of Canada website states that COVID-19 safety measures mean that "Service provider organizations are focusing on delivering critical resettlement and settlement services until further notice" (Government of Canada, 2020, HUMA - Settlement Services section). The critical services include only income support and basic services for government-assisted refugees, help setting up medical appointments, and crisis counseling. Despite this seemingly narrow offering of services, by and large, municipal

McGill University

Corresponding Author: Marianne Barker, Department of Integrated Studies in Education, McGill University, 3700 McTavish St, Montreal, Quebec H3A 1Y2

Author email: marianne.barker@mail.mcgill.ca

programs and services for immigrants have remained rather dedicated to immigrants' safety and well-being during the COVID-19 crisis. In large Canadian cities like Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver, many organizations continue to provide extended 'non-critical' services, including integration and settlement programs, legal coaching, interpretation support, language programming, employment support and career services for youth and adults. Many of these continued services are only available online, and in some cases, these services are currently unable to accommodate new registrants. This has likely left many newcomers in vulnerable situations, rendering them in positions of instability and isolation.

Rousseau (2020) observes that crises like the current one tend to rely on a standard response "aimed at covering the basic needs of the population: security, shelter, health care, food, energy and heating" (p. 12). These foci, while certainly essential, miss quite a lot in terms of immigrants' integration. If we are to anticipate that a crisis like this might happen again, there ought to be approaches, strategies and policies in place to address the social needs of immigrant populations, who are vulnerable in ordinary times, and at risk of greater vulnerability and marginalization in times of global crisis (Cholera et al., 2020; Yayboke, 2020).

Given the current state of affairs, this paper discusses ways that immigrants' social integration is impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This paper is guided by the following questions:

1. In what ways has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the experiences of immigrants' social integration?

2. What are the ways adult educators (i.e. language teachers/programmers, immigrant settlement services providers) can respond to reverse the negative impact on immigrants' social integration?

I begin this paper by highlighting intersectionality as a suitable theoretical framework for discussions on immigration and integration. An intersectional framework centers on subjectivities and lived experiences; in this case, I explore the specific challenges and barriers of immigrants' experiences. Immigrants have been coping with increased inequalities resulting from COVID-19, including new instances of daily cultural discrimination and unequal treatment concerning labour rights and access to health care. Based on these challenges, I outline a set of recommendations for ameliorating the experiences of immigrants during the current global crisis.

Intersectionality

This paper uses intersectionality as a theoretical framework (Christensen, 2009; Davis, 2008) to conceptualize the complexity of linguistic, cultural, and social integration among immigrants. The primary aim of intersectionality is to attend to marginalized and invisibilized voices and to advocate for policy that improves society by revealing disparities, validating the lives and stories of previously ignored individuals and groups, empowering individuals and communities, and removing barriers within social structures that limit opportunities for marginalized people (Choo & Ferree, 2010). Intersectionality attends to multiple subjectivities and power relations, that is, "the interaction between gender, race, and other categories of difference in individual lives, social practices, institutional arrangements, and cultural ideologies and the outcomes of these interactions in terms of power" (Davis, 2008, p. 68).

Intersectionality looks at how categories of difference (e.g., gender, race) are intermeshed in unique ways to comprise a single synthesized identity. Several categories are identified as salient in Bürkner's (2012) intersectionality research on immigrants' settlement, including gender, age, body, health and ability; other salient categories are geographic location, immigration status, educational literacy, and employment status (Liu et al., 2020). Based on categories like these, individuals experience discrimination (or privilege) by being positioned according to a valuation of their social and symbolic capital, contingent to social and power relations. Intersectionality is a useful framework for theorizing the complexity and dynamism of immigrant experiences in ordinary times, and can also help inform the current circumstances in a COVID-19 world. Using intersectionality as a theoretical conceptual framework helps to center immigrants through consideration of their daily life experiences (e.g. of discrimination, stress, racism, ageism, etc.).

Social Integration

The integration of immigrants into a host society involves a process in which newcomers and existing members of a host society form an integrated whole by negotiating their intersectional identities, and their economic, political, cultural, and social perspectives (Ager & Strang, 2008; Penninx, 2005). This paper is principally concerned with the social aspect of integration in the Canadian context. Even outside of the context of a global pandemic, social integration is a complex process. Social integration includes immigrants developing a sense of belonging within and feelings of attachment toward their new home (Valle Painter, 2013). Such feelings are discursively produced through the daily interactions in which newcomers engage. Social relationships and communicative events continually (re)position newcomers and contribute to them feeling a sense of belonging (or not) to the host society (Hedetoft, 2002; Jones & Krzyzanowski, 2008; Wodak, 2008). Because newcomers come from diverse backgrounds, inhabit diverse communities, and have diverse goals, their intersectional subjectivities are constructed contingently in not necessarily predictable ways (Christensen, 2009). Nevertheless, social integration is critical to their success and well-being in their new home.

Adult educators involved in language training and immigrant services are in positions to influence immigrants' social integration. First, language training is often held as a critical vehicle for social integration. The Canadian government argues that "knowledge of an official language is a crucial prerequisite to social integration" and that proficiency in a host country language increases "non-native speakers' confidence and sense of affiliation" (Government of Canada, 2010, Evaluation of the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada [LINC] Program section). Not only the government, but critical social research (Haque, 2012; Li, 2003) and second language acquisition research (Gumperz, 1982; Peirce, 1995) also recognize that a link exists between language acquisition and identity development. For this reason, social integration of immigrants is a concern for language teachers and language program planners, as well as policy makers more broadly. However, social integration cannot be achieved only through 'solving a language problem' because social integration also includes employment, housing, education, and health; developing social connections, resources and cultural knowledge; having a sense of safety and stability; and having a shared understanding of rights and citizenship (Ager & Strang, 2008). Therefore, social integration of newcomers broadly concerns adult educators involved in immigration, integration and settlement services, whose goal is to socialize newcomers in their new home. Briefly, social integration concerns the linguistic, cultural and social education of immigrants.

Four Aspects of Social Integration

The four aspects of social integration are as follows and outlined below: (a) the ability to form social bonds, bridges and links; (b) developing a sense of belonging; (c) linking social integration to economic integration; and (d) linking social integration to linguistic integration.

First, social integration involves fostering social bonds, social bridges (Gittell & Vidal, 1998; Putnam, 1995), and social links (Szreter, 2002). These are connections formed by immigrants enable them to develop social capital. Social bonds are links that migrants form among family or co-ethnic, co-religious and co-national groups; social bridges include a migrant's relationship with other diverse members within their community; and social links are relationships to structures of the state. These three types of social connections are foundational to newcomers forming networks based on trust and shared values that enable them to function effectively as part of a community (Ager & Strang, 2008). These social connections, manifested through daily interactions with others, are also critical to developing a sense of belonging.

Second, developing a sense of belonging stems from local sources, such as familiarity to a place, and daily experiences and interactions (Hedetoft, 2002). Gradually, sources of belonging are internalized as determinants of home or self-identity, and they become feelings of belonging. Importantly, feelings of belonging are constructed through discourses, and their "anonymous, unnoticed permeation of our ways of thinking and talking and making sense of the social world" (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 16). Discourses are ideological in that they advance beliefs and values that continually (re)construct inclusive or exclusive norms in society (Jones & Krzyzanowski, 2008; Wodak, 2008). For example, the view that a more proficient English speaker is 'more Canadian' is an ideology that cultivates a deficit view of speakers with lower levels of English ability, often with the harmful implication that they are less deserving of all the rights and privileges accorded to a more fluent English speaker. Migrants' ways of valuing or participating in discourses determines their relationship to

the social world (Gee, 2004). Thus, the daily interactions and experiences that (re)produce discourses heavily impact on migrants' sense of belonging.

Third, economic integration is undeniably tied to social integration. Many immigration and settlement services aim to help newcomers seek and obtain employment, advance in their careers, develop language skills for the workplace, or foster pragmatic skills surrounding workplace socialization. Braddell and Miller (2017) found that immigrants in the UK were better integrated when they received support and training from colleagues and managers. Also, when language training is embedded in workplaces, it motivates newcomers and helps them develop communicative skills that help them succeed (Beacco et al., 2017).

The fourth and last aspect is social integration is related to linguistic integration. Research has shown a strong link between methods used in language instruction and sense of belonging. For example, the use of multilingual teaching approaches (i.e., including learners' first languages in the English language classroom) has been shown to increase learners' sense of belonging, engagement and participation in the language classroom and beyond (Block, 2018). Therefore, language teachers play a major role "in fostering social inclusion, professional mobility, active citizenship and participation" among their learners (Bednarz, 2017, p. 80). Language classes are critical sites where learners can make connections beyond the classroom, helping them develop social bonds, bridges, and links in their communities (Jezak & Carrasco, 2017). Language classes can inform students about government services that prioritize newcomers' safety and stability (Fritz & Donat, 2017), and can foster important community connections with local newspapers, health care providers, career advisors and other businesses (Swinney, 2017).

Impact of COVID-19 on Social Integration

The COVID-19 pandemic has unquestionably reshaped the world in widespread and dynamic ways. Each of the above aspects of social integration have been impacted. Newcomers' potential to form and nurture social bridges, bonds and links has shifted. Early demographic COVID-19 data shows that many immigrants are stranded in their homes with their families (Banerjee & Rai, 2020). Immigrant communities tend to live in crowded multigenerational households and tight knit communities (Keyton, 2020). While this may indicate that immigrants' most intimate social bonds will remain intact, unfortunately, this proximity among of immigrants in a time of recommended physical distancing has had devastating differential impacts on immigrants' health. For instance, in Sweden, 5% of COVID-19 cases were found to be in the Somali immigrant population despite only 1% of the country being Somali immigrants (Keyton, 2020). In terms of health, this pandemic crisis has hit the most vulnerable people, immigrants included, the hardest.

While face to face social bonding among immigrants may remain an important resource for them, albeit with dangerous side effects, the social bridges and links that newcomers have access to have been severely severed. In terms of social bridges, stay at home orders have limited interactions with other community members. Cholera et al. (2020) predict that the COVID-19 pandemic will disproportionately impact the health and well-being immigrants as they "navigate school closures, lack of health insurance and paid leave, and decisions to seek medical care or public services amidst ongoing immigration enforcement" (p. 4). In terms of social links, many government services are currently only provided online, meaning that beneficiaries are only those who have access to digital devices, an internet connection, and digital literacies. The lockdown has impacted services provided to landed immigrants, and processing of new immigrants has slowed significantly (McAuliffe & Bauloz, 2020). Travel restrictions and closed borders have separated families and complicated immigration and visa processes, especially for refugees, asylum seekers, and internationally displaced migrants (Yayboke, 2020). These conditions will undoubtedly have devastating effects on migrants' positioning as they receive less emotional support from extended family and friends (i.e., fewer social bonds and bridges), and as they struggle to access key material and symbolic resources usually provided by social links to support their integration (i.e., fewer social links).

Newcomers' ability to position themselves and develop their sense of belonging through discursive daily interactions has also been impacted. Newcomers who are staying at home have fewer opportunities to engage in interactions that could shape their sense of belonging. Many migrants have encountered marginalizing or xenophobic attitudes related to the spread of COVID-19. Particularly, those of Chinese and other Asian backgrounds have been scapegoated as having caused the virus, and are navigating increased discrimination and distancing as visible minorities who choose to wear a facemask to protect themselves and others against the virus (Liu et al., 2020). On a broader discursive level, governments have enforced travel restrictions and health

screenings in response to "a growing push to limit newcomers out of fear of spreading the disease" (Omidvar, 2020, para. 4). Such measures reinforce anti-immigrant sentiments, and are then taken up by the general population, validating a xenophobic stance that views immigrants as less deserving of rights and respect even as we all face the same disease. In Europe, de Bellis (2020) worries the pandemic will provide "governments with a chance to build the walls of Fortress Europe even higher," (para. 10) causing lasting impacts for immigrants and their families as they are experience more 'othering'. As immigrants navigate heightened discrimination and 'othering', their sense of belonging will undoubtedly be impacted.

Economic stability is no longer taken for granted in the COVID-19 pandemic. Unprecedented financial and economic impacts suggest an inevitable economic recession, and has caused borders to close, businesses to shut down, a huge decline in the stock market, and significant government emergency response funds and benefits. These circumstances present stress to many low-skilled frontline workers who live month-to-month. Wildeboer (2020) observes that workers in his company do not have savings to weather a layoff and stock up on health supplies on top of their existing monthly payments. Immigrant populations disproportionately work in low-wage jobs (Cholera et al., 2020), shouldering the burden of essential work such as caring for elderly or children, working in grocery stores or food delivery, etc. (de Bellis, 2020; Rousseau, 2020). Immigrants in these positions do not have the privilege of being able to work from home and often find themselves in compromised working conditions (Yayboke, 2020). Furthermore, workplace priorities have entirely, and appropriately, shifted to focus on accounting for the safety of workers as much as possible. This means the workplace is no longer a key site for socialization and context-based language training.

Implementing language training programs and reaching migrants with lower levels of language proficiency have become more complex tasks in the COVID-19 context. First, there is the challenge of getting pertinent information to those who require language assistance. "Families with limited English proficiency must decipher rapidly evolving public health directives, such as 'shelter in place' orders and recommendations for mask-wearing, without multilingual and culturally-relevant messaging" (Cholera et al., 2020, p. 4). Second, language programming and education in general has been interrupted. Mukhopadhyay et al. (2020) outline ways that social distancing has impacted learning. They note that the disruption to in-person meetings, conferences, and the usual routes for learning and teamwork means that educators have been challenged with navigating a less familiar digital landscape. Rousseau (2020) states, "Just as a necessity, our society will become more digital… much faster than expected" (p. 9). This requires quickly developing digital management tools and software. In many cases, language classes have also been moved online. A grave concern is whether all immigrants have access to a digital device and a stable internet connection. If not, "the achievement gap may widen further" (Cholera et al., 2020, p. 7).

Finally, COVID-19 will likely leave a damaging long-lasting psychological impact on immigrants and host society alike. Banerjee and Rai (2020) warn of the significant psychosocial impact that the pandemic will have, even beyond the rising numbers of cases and fatalities. Social isolation can lead to chronic loneliness and boredom, impacting physical and mental well-being. Loneliness is a prime indicator of social well-being, and it can contribute to domestic interpersonal violence, poor nutrition, sedentary behaviour, anger and fear, and increased likelihood of depression, anxiety, substance use, post-traumatic stress disorders and insomnia (Balanzá-Martínez et al., 2020; Banerjee & Rai, 2020; Torales et al., 2020; Usher et al., 2020). These studies urgently advocate the importance of focusing on mental health throughout this pandemic: "this is crucial for the vulnerable groups, such as low-income families and children, the elderly, social isolated individuals" (Balanzá-Martinez et al., 2020, p. 2), and I would certainly add immigrant groups to the list, considering the gauntlet of factors discussed above. Usher et al. (2020) stresses that "severing social support as part of an imposed quarantine or isolation strategy can threaten an individual's sense of connectedness," (p. 2756) thus impacting migrants' sense of belonging if mental health among migrants is not addressed. It is extremely important to quickly rethink traditional strategies for engaging with these populations (Berg-Weger & Morley, 2020).

Intersectional Recommendations for Migrants during COVID-19

Although the outlook for social integration in the pandemic appears bleak, using an intersectional lens helps theorize better outcomes for migrants moving forward. Through exploration of literature surrounding COVID-19 in the previous section, I centered the experiences of immigrants. I highlighted increased inequalities experienced by minority groups, attending to their subjectivities and positionalities. In what follows, I make five

recommendations to improve the experiences of migrants during the COVID-19 crisis. These recommendations aim to remove or diminish barriers, improving the daily lives of migrants through the pandemic and contributing to a more equitable society.

Recommendation 1: Support basic physical and psychological needs.

The first recommendation stems from the literature that suggests harmful long-term psychosocial impacts caused by the loneliness of social isolation orders. Considering the severed social connections (i.e. bridges and links), particularly for migrants, Cholera et al. (2020) recommend "proactive outreach to immigrant communities to disseminate culturally-relevant public health resources and timely information regarding immigration policy and COVID-19" (p. 6). This includes developing equitable telehealth workflows, and advocacy for access to professional interpreter services (Cholera et al., 2020). Also, early research in the COVID-19 pandemic suggests individuals must focus on their psychological well-being and mental health. During this time, settlement information providers should be providing advice and guidance that advocates healthy nutrition, engaging in physical activity at home, getting enough quality sleep, and finding ways to support self-care (Balanzá-Martínez et al., 2020). Importantly, government services must not forego the provision of counselling services that could critically help migrants overcome challenges of maintaining mental health in a pandemic. Such counseling could support migrants in fostering resilience in a time of crisis by developing a sense of self-efficacy, emotional maturity, and an ability to access social resources and support to regulate well-being (Losada-Baltar et al., 2020). This type of resilience is paramount to newcomers' abilities to continue participating in as many daily routines and relationships as possible, thus nurturing their sense of belonging even in times of crisis when they receive less external support.

Recommendation 2: Develop digital literacies and provide digital devices.

Since the world has quickly shifted to digital platforms for both working from home and delivery of education, migrants' potential for social integration has been critically impacted in the areas of economic and linguistic integration. As seen in the literature, digital access and digital literacy have become requirements. This has created an urgent need to improve and support digital literacy development while simultaneously making digital interfaces available and as straightforward as possible. While technology can help to alleviate some of the current disruptions to work and school, adjusting to unusual patterns in both workplace and educational settings is challenging. Mukhopadhyay et al. (2020) suggest that platforms for remote sharing, video conferencing, screen sharing and social media platforms and technologies "will keep us learning and collaborating successfully in these challenging times" (p. 25). However, there is a risk that migrants with limited educational backgrounds or who do not have access to the required technology could be lost in the process, thus widening the digital divide. Two concerns arise: the first is infrastructure, namely who has access to technological devices, internet connection and broadband; and the second is a concern of digital literacy, that is, who has the ability to use and benefit from the services/resources provided through digital technologies.

While there is no quick fix solution to narrowing the digital divide, some measures can be taken during this time of crisis to ensure vulnerable populations do not fall too far behind. Liu (2020, para. 3) says that "education systems have a critical role to play in addressing the digital divide, especially during pandemic-led school closures." Liu outlines the three-fold strategy used by educators in China when schools closed: A policy response featuring an educational plan for schools and teachers, action plans offering alternatives to online education including waiving or lowering internet usage fees and broadcasting classes on radio stations, and the development of cloud-based resource pooling for teachers and students. We should not take for granted that all students have equal access to online sources. Even beyond the school context, a lot of information and many services are offered almost exclusively online during COVID-19 (e.g. booking medical appointments, banking services, joining live streams for workplace/educational webinars or for church/religious services). We must consider alternative ways to provide information and services to those who have limited access to internet or digital devices. Using phone calls, radio, TV or a combination of in-person and online may be a way to reach more vulnerable populations and to connect them to online services (Ramsetty & Adams, 2020). Also, integrating community workers or perhaps advocating a 'check on your neighbor' mindset would increase a sense of solidarity among communities and increase the likelihood that vulnerable members are better supported.

In terms of longer term solutions, attending to the infrastructure of digital access will be important. This requires advocacy to help communities demand better and more affordable internet and cellular service, and ultimately reshape internet access across Canada. Desrosiers (2020) recommends beginning by cultivating aware-

ness of existing constraints and structural biases (e.g., identifying individuals/groups who may not have credit cards to set up internet bill payments; identifying if certain individuals/groups are lacking access to applications, devices, or internet connectivity that they need for work, school, or daily life), then putting measures in place to fund laptops, internet access and cellular data packages. Ultimately, reducing the digital divide during the pandemic involves collaboration among community members and groups, internet service providers and across all levels of government. Sadeque (2020) points out that the government can remove barriers through tax incentives and subsidies, but the private sector must help by providing affordable options. At the same time, researchers and academia can provide capacity building, adult educators can support advocacy, and community members can foster social networks of support for digital literacies that foster social and symbolic capital for vulnerable populations. Nurturing collaboration and a multi-scale approach across levels and sectors will be paramount to migrants' success in COVID-19 and future global crises.

Recommendation 3: Foster empathy among non-migrants.

The third recommendation tends to the ways social relationships and belonging have been impacted by COVID-19. The literature above suggested that migrants have experienced more discrimination since the start of the pandemic. COVID-19 has created us/them binaries between native-born Canadians and immigrants that brings to the fore fundamental ideological inequalities in society. Compared to native-born Canadians, disproportionate numbers of immigrants have been denied rights (e.g., difficulty accessing health care) and privileges (e.g. not being able to work from home; working in poor, sometimes unsafe, conditions), and have experienced discrimination and scapegoating from more dominant members of society. These realities reflect dominant ideologies that are systemic and pervasive, and discursively produced. As discourses are enacted, they construct the reality we live in. Constructing a new reality requires resisting dominant discourses and creating competing counter-discourses, such as a discourse of an abiding sense of global collectivity and community. This global collectivity and community discourse surfaces in the literature reviewed. For example, Banerjee and Rai (2020) advocate caring for, valuing and respecting all frontline workers, even by simply exchanging greetings with neighbors and strangers to generate a feeling that 'we are all in this together' (p. 3). Wildeboer (2020) also suggests the pandemic may help us become "aware of the hopes, fears and challenges of our fellow citizens" (p. 6). Focusing on the bonds among humanity collectively living through a shared experience may impact daily interactions toward more equitable outcomes. Furthermore, developing friendships and working alongside migrants will foster consideration of different perspectives rooted in migrants' unique multiple subjectivities. These perspectives can inform more equitable approaches by policy makers and health organizations.

Migrants have been held as objects of scapegoating and discrimination long before the current global pandemic crisis. Jantzi (2015) suggests that key national documents like the Canadian Immigrant Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms advance discourses that implicitly and explicitly discriminate against immigrants by highlighting the desirability of French and English Canadians while constructing a negative view of immigrants and refugees as 'others' (Thobani, 2007). Jantzi identified themes emerging in the IRPA including migrants as 'dangerous', commodified, foreign, deceptive, backwards, and racialized, 'stranger', and non-citizen – as contrasted to the trustworthy nature of settler Canadians. These documents need to be edited to reflect a more humanitarian discourse that deconstructs the fear-motivated 'dangerous' identity currently ascribed to newcomers. Jantzi (2015) suggests we should take care to replace existing constructions "with a more open minded discourse that contemplates the more likely reasons for people moving to Canada, such as economic opportunities, life chances, and even curiosity – all of which construct a more complex, innocent human being" (p. 62). At the same time as we work to reverse discourses within macro-level national documents dictating rights and freedoms, similar inclusive and humanitarian discourses should be fostered at the micro level, in daily interactions within communities.

Recommendation 4: Maintain social connections in resourceful ways.

Across the board, immigrants and non-immigrants alike have had to be resourceful in maintaining social connections in the face of social distancing. Data from a web panel survey by Statistics Canada collected between March 29 - April 3, 2020, indicate that compared to Canadian-born citizens, immigrants were 14% more likely to be concerned about maintaining social ties and being able to support one another through the COVID-19 pandemic, and were twice as concerned about violence in the home (LaRochelle-Côté & Uppal, 2020). These troubling statistics point to an urgent need on the part of compassionate community members and settlement

service providers to intentionally check in on migrants during the pandemic. Settlement service providers who are critical supports to newcomers when they first arrive can reach out to relatively settled migrants to provide support, a sense of community, tips for well-being and self-care, and resources to other public or private sector services. If periodically checking in on migrants became a normal part of settlement processes, it would also provide a chance to gain insight into both the acute challenges and chronic barriers faced by migrants - and of course, to act to address inequalities.

To further facilitate social connections within communities during COVID-19, adult educators can consider creative and resourceful ways to stay connected. Berg-Weger and Morley (2020) suggest interventions including "laughter, mindfulness, meditation, reminiscence, and horticulture therapy, body movement" (p. 457). Incorporating art, exercise and health, and therapeutic writing into routines can lead to decreased loneliness, social isolation and healthcare costs, as well as increased feelings of well-being. These types of activities can be incorporated into online delivery of settlement services.

Recommendation 5: Use intersectionality to approach future COVID-19 research.

Intersectionality recognizes that inequalities are contingent on social and historical contexts. Identifying context-specific sources of discrimination is prerequisite to removing barriers, both at a micro and macro level. The recommendations I have made so far inherently require using an intersectional lens to identify which/how individuals are experiencing discrimination. Intersectionality also reminds us that there is no unified 'group experience', but that sub-group members have different experiences of inequality and discrimination. At the very least, this means it is not enough to just consider 'immigrants' in the pandemic, but empirical research must also explore the experiences of 'elderly immigrants' or 'immigrants from China' or 'elderly immigrants from China' to begin to understand the experiences discrimination of sub-group identities. By identifying individuals and groups who are most negatively impacted, we can reconfigure policy in such a way that it identifies alternative ways of providing specific groups access to resources, information, and services. Intersectional research findings could also help foster empathy among non-migrants by introducing more equitable discourses into daily interactions, or at the very least, prompting more regular check-ins on migrant neighbours and friends.

Ultimately, in each of the above recommendations, the most important way to support migrants is to acknowledge their position(s) and experience(s) on their own terms. To that end, future research that explores migrant experiences times of global crises must take a ground-up approach (Bowleg, 2008; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Christensen and Jensen (2012) suggest that life-story narratives are an effective method for intersectionality research. Hearing life-story narratives will reveal how people tell their own stories and stress their various affiliations and connections, which will inform an understanding of their local sense of belonging and positioning. An intersectional analysis can then move across levels to compare how this social positioning may have been constructed institutionally, intersubjectively, and representationally (Yuval-Davis, 2006), with the goal of having the inequalities inform policies that will best support specific groups.

Conclusion

The recommendations outlined offer suggestions for short and long term action toward a society that supports and cares for minority groups in a crisis, rather than leaving them behind. The greatest successes in containing and navigating the COVID-19 pandemic so far have resulted from nations learning from one another, and from coordinated global action and collective international efforts (Omidvar, 2020). Although many countries have responded by tightening regulations on migrants and subsequently marginalizing them, "the centrality of migrants in the social, cultural and economic fabric of our globalized world… suggests that only inclusive approaches that help and promote everybody's rights, health and well-being, can allow communities and societies to respond more effectively to this crisis, and reduce the risk of future ones" (Guadagno, 2020). Inclusive and culturally sensitive approaches will not only promote physical well-being, but also counter stigmatizing attitudes adopted by many over the previous months. Based on partnerships and relationships with immigrants, generating advocacy and awareness of their experiences in current times is a crucial step forward in navigating the pandemic and creating a more just society.

References

Ager, A., & Strang, A. (2008). Understanding integration: A conceptual framework. *Journal of Refugee Studies, 21*(2), 166-191. https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fen016

Balanzá-Martínez, V., Atienza-Carbonell, B., Kapczinski, F., & Brandini De Boni, R. (2020). Lifestyle behaviours during the COVID-19 - time to connect. *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica*, *141*, 399-400. https://doi.org/10.1111/acps.13177

Banerjee, D., & Rai, M. (2020). Social isolation in COVID-19: The impact of loneliness. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, *66*(6), 525-527. https://doi.org/ 10.1177/0020764020922269

Beacco, J.-C., Krumm, H.-J., & Little, D. (2017). Introduction (English version). In J.-C. Beacco, H.-J. Krumm, D. Little, & P. Thalgott (Eds.), *The linguistic integration of adult migrants: Some lessons from research (L'intégration linguistique des migrants adultes: Les enseignements de la recherche)* (pp. 1-4). De Gruyter.

Bednarz, F. (2017). Professional and social integration of migrants and language learning: Convergences and challenges at the European level. In J.-C. Beacco, H.-J. Krumm, D. Little, & P. Thalgott (Eds.), *The linguistic integration of adult migrants: Some lessons from research (L'intégration linguistique des migrants adultes: Les enseignements de la recherche)* (pp. 75-81). De Gruyter.

Berg-Weger, M., & Morley, J. E. (2020). Loneliness and social isolation in older adults during the COVID-19 pandemic: Implications for gerontological social work. *Journal of Nutrition, Health and Aging, 24*(5), 456-458. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12603-020-1366-8

Block, D. (2018). The political economy of language education research (or the lack thereof): Nancy Fraser and the case of translanguaging. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies, 15*(4), 237-257. https://doi.org/10.1080/15427587.2018.1466300

Bowleg, L. (2008). When black + lesbian + woman ≠ black lesbian woman: The methodological challenges of qualitative and quantitative intersectionality research. *Sex Roles, 59*, 312-325. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-008-9400-z

Braddell, A., & Miller, L. (2017). Supporting migrants in low-paid, low-skilled employment in London to improve their English. In J.-C. Beacco, H.-J. Krumm, D. Little, & P. Thalgott (Eds.), *Settlement, integration and language learning: Possible synergies. A task-based, community-focused program from the region of Durham (Ontario, Canada)* (pp. 309-314). De Gruyter. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110477498-023

Brubaker, R., & Cooper, F. (2000). Beyond "identity". *Theory and Society, 29*(1), 1-47. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3108478

Bürkner, H.-J. (2011). Intersectionality: How gender studies might inspire the analysis of social inequality among migrants. *Population, Space and Place, 18*(2), 181-195. https://doi.org/10.1002/psp.664

Cholera, R., Falusi, O. O., & Linton, J. M. (2020). Sheltering in place in a xenophobic climate: COVID-19 and children in immigrant families. *Pediatrics*, *146*(1), 1-6. https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2020-1094

Choo, H. Y., & Ferree, M. M. (2010). Practicing intersectionality in sociological research: A critical analysis of inclusions, interactions, and institutions in the study of inequalities. *Sociological Theory, 28*(2), 129-149. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9558.2010.01370.x

Christensen, A.-D. (2009). Belonging and unbelonging from an intersectional perspective. *Gender, Technology and Development, 13*(1), 21-41. https://doi.org/10.1177/097185240901300102

Christensen, A.-D., & Jensen, S. Q. (2012). Doing intersectional analysis: Methodological implications for qualitative research. *Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research, 20*(2), 109-125. https://doi.org/10.1080/08038740.2012.673505

Davis, K. (2008). Intersectionality as buzzword: A sociology of science perspective on what makes a feminist theory successful. *Feminist Theory, 9*(1), 67-85. http://doi.org/10.1177/1464700108086364

de Bellis, M. (2020, 11 May). *The COVID-19 pandemic can teach us compassion for migrants and refugees.* Amnesty International. https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/05/before-covid19-europe-lacked -empathy-for-migrants-the-pandemic-can-teach-us-compassion/

Desrosiers, M.-E. (2020, March 25). *As universities move classes online, let's not forget the digital divide*. Policy Options. https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/march-2020/as-universities-move-classes-online-lets-not-forget-the-digital-divide/

Fritz, T., & Donat, D. (2017). What migrant learners need. In J.-C. Beacco, H.-J. Krumm, D. Little, & P. Thalgott (Eds.), *The linguistic integration of adult migrants: Some lessons from research (L'intégration linguistique des migrants adultes: Les enseignements de la recherche)* (pp. 163-168). De Gruyter Mouton. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110477498-021

Gee, J. P. (2004). Discourse analysis: What makes it critical? In R. Rogers (Ed.), *An introduction to critical discourse analysis in education* (pp. 19-50). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Gittell, R., & Vidal, A. (1998). *Community organizing: Building social capital as a development strategy*. Sage Publications.

Government of Canada. (2010). *Evaluation of the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program*. https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/reports-statistics/evaluations/language-instruction-newcomers-canada-2010/relevance.html

Government of Canada. (2020). Find free newcomers services near you. https://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/services/index.asp

Guadagno, L. (2020). Migrants and the COVID-19 pandemic: An initial analysis. *International Organization for Migration, 60*, 1-25. https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/mrs-60.pdf

Gumperz, J. (1982). *Discourse strategies*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511611834

Haque, E. (2012). *Multiculturalism within a bilingual framework: Language, race, and belonging in Canada*. University of Toronto Press.

Hedetoft, U. (2002). Discourses and images of belonging: Migrants between "new racism", liberal nationalism and globalization. *Academy for Migration Studies in Denmark Working Paper Series* 5/2002. https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.501.6156&rep=rep1&type=pdf

Jantzi, M. (2015). *'Stranger danger': A critical discourse analysis of the immigration and refugee protection act.* [Master's thesis, Wilfrid Laurier University]. Scholars Commons at Laurier. https://scholars.wlu.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1005&context=soci_mrp

Jezak, M., & Carrasco, E. (2017). Integration trajectories of adult (im)migrations in minority and minoritized contexts: Ottawa and Barcelona. In J.-C. Beacco, H.-J. Krumm, D. Little, & P. Thalgott (Eds.), *The linguistic integration of adult migrants: Some lessons from research (L'intégration linguistique des migrants adultes: Les enseignements de la recherche)* (pp. 97-103). De Gruyter. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110477498-013

Jones, P., & Krzyzanowski, M. (2008). Identity, belonging and migration: Beyond constructing 'others'. In G. Delanty, P. Jones, & R. Wodak (Eds.), *Identity, belonging and migration* (pp. 38-53). Liverpool University Press.

Keyton, D. (2020, May 9). *Coronavirus takes a toll in Sweden's immigrant community*. CTV News. https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/coronavirus-takes-a-toll-in-sweden-s-immigrant-community-1.4932203

LaRochelle-Côté, S., & Uppal, S. (2020, May 1). The social and economic concerns of immigrants during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Statistics Canada*. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/45-28-0001/2020001/article/00012-eng.htm

Li, P. (2003). Deconstructing Canada's discourse of immigrant integration. *Journal of International Migration and Integration, 4*(3), 315-333. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-003-1024-0

Liu, J. (2020, May 25). Lessons learned from China: Bridging the digital divide during COVID-19. WISE. https://www.wise-qatar.org/lessons-learned-from-china-bridging-the-digital-divide-during-covid-19/

Liu, J., Jurkova, S., & Morales, R. (2020, May 26). "We are all in this together," but who is the "we"? Exploring the impacts of the pandemic on immigrants through an intersectional analysis. *Pandemic Pedagogies* [Webinar]: Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education. https://www.casae-aceea.ca/webinars/

Losada-Baltar, A., Jiménez-Gonzalo, L., Gallego-Alberto, L., del Sequeros Pedroso-Chaparro, M., Fernandes-Pires, J., & Márquez-González, M. (2020). "We are staying at home." Associations of self-perceptions of aging, personal and family resources, and loneliness with psychological distress during the lockdown period of COVID-19. *The Journals of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences*, e10–e16. https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbaa048

McAuliffe, M., & Bauloz, C. (2020, April 6). The coronavirus pandemic could be devastating for the world's migrants. *World Economic Forum.* https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/04/the-coronavirus-pandemic-could-be-devastating-for-the-worlds-refugees/

Mukhopadhyay, S., Booth, A. L., Calkins, S. M., Doxtader, E. E., Fine, S. W., Gardner, J. M., Gonzalez, R. S., Mirza, K. M., & Jiang, X. S. (2020). Leveraging technology for remote learning in the era of COVID-19 and social distancing: Tips and resources for pathology educators and trainees. *Archives of Pathology & Laboratory Medicine, 144*(9), 1027-1036. https://doi.org/10.5858/arpa.2020-0201-ED

Omidvar, R. (2020). Will Canada be as open to immigrants after COVID-19? https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/may-2020/will-canada-be-as-open-to-immigrants-after-covid-19/

Peirce, B. N. (1995). Social identity, investment, and language learning. *TESOL Quarterly, 29*(1), 9-31. https://doi.org/10.2307/3587803

Penninx, R. (2005). Integration of migrants: Economic, social, cultural and political dimensions. In M. Macura, A. L. Macdonald & W. Haug (Eds.), *The new demographic regime: Population challenges and policy responses* (pp. 137-151). United Nations.

Putnam, R. S. (1995). Bowling alone: Civic disengagement in America. Simon and Schuster.

Ramsetty, A., & Adams, C. (2020). Impact of the digital divide in the age of COVID-19. *Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association*, 27(7), 1147-1148. https://doi.org/10.1093/jamia/ocaa078

Rousseau, H.-P. (2020). *COVID-19 - Economic policy options for managing and recovering from the crisis in Quebec and Canada*. IDEAS. https://www-deslibris-ca.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/ID/10103654

Sadeque, S. (2020). *COVID-19: The digital divide grows wider amid global lockdown*. IPS-Inter Press Service. http://www.ipsnews.net/2020/05/covid-19-digital-divide-grows-wider-amid-global-lockdown/

Swinney, K. (2017). Networks and super connectors. In J.-C. Beacco, H.-J. Krumm, D. Little, & P. Thalgott (Eds.), The Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants/L'intégration linguistique des migrants adultes (pp. 207-212). De Gruyter Mouton. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110477498-028

Szreter, S. (2002). The state of social capital: Bringing back in power, politics, and history. *Theory and Society, 31*(5), 573-621.

Thobani, S. (2007). *Exalted subjects: Studies in the making of race and nation in Canada*. University of Toronto Press.

Torales, J., O'Higgins, M., Mauricio Castaldelli-Maia, J., & Ventriglio, A. (2020). The outbreak of COVID-19 coronavirus and its impact on global mental health. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, *66*(4), 317-320. https://doi.org/10.1177/0020764020915212

Usher, K., Bhullar, N., & Jackson, D. (2020). Life in the pandemic: Social isolation and mental health. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, *29*(15-16), 2756-2757. https://doi/org/10.1111/jocn15290

Valle Painter, C. (2013). *Sense of belonging: Literature review*. Research and Evaluation, Citizenship and Immigration Canada. https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/ircc/migration/ircc/english/pdf/research-stats/r48a-2012belonging-eng.pdf

Wildeboer, R. (2020). *Facing the human and economic costs of fighting COVID-19*. Macdonald-Laurier Institute. https://macdonaldlaurier.ca/files/pdf/MLICommentary_April2020_Wildeboer_FWeb.pdf

Wodak, R. (2008). 'Us' and 'them': Inclusion and exclusion - discrimination via discourse. In D. Gerard, R. Wodak, & P. Jones (Eds.), *Identity, belonging and migration* (pp. 54-77). University Liverpool Press.

Yayboke, E. (2020, March 25). *Five ways COVID-19 is changing global migration*. Center for Strategic and International Studies. https://www.csis.org/ analysis/five-ways-covid-19-changing-global-migration

Yuval-Davis, N. (2006). Intersectionality and feminist politics. *European Journal of Women's Studies, 13*(3), 193-209. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350506806065752